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The Circle of Safety
Ever Alert / Ever Safe
Program Overview and FAQs

April 2024

<https://bsa-cst10.org/safety/>





Scouting America™

"A Scout is never taken by surprise; he knows exactly what to do when anything unexpected happens."

-Robert Baden-Powell



Equipment and environment

Safe and appropriately sized equipment, courses, camps, campsites, trails, or playing fields are used properly. Leaders periodically check gear use and the environment for changing conditions that could affect safety.

- Confirming participants' clothing is appropriate for expected temperatures, sun exposure, weather events, and terrain.
- Providing equipment that is appropriately sized for participants, is in good repair, and is used properly.
- Ensuring personal and group safety equipment is available, properly fitted, and used consistently and in accordance with training.
- Reviewing the activity area for suitability during planning and immediately before use, and monitoring the area during the activity through supervision. • Adjusting the activity for changing conditions or ending it if safety cannot be maintained

Ever Alert/Ever Safe Program Overview and FAQs

Suffolk County Council has implemented Ever Alert/Ever Safe to promote an ongoing unit consciousness of Safety. To create Active Awareness in a Circle of Safety around our youth.

Safe Scouting is the process of preventing personal injury and preparation in case someone somehow is hurt or has a medical emergency. It's the National Council's Safety policies and guidelines on how to prevent and recover from adverse events during Scouting activities.

The program looks to increase understanding of what Safe Scouting means and streamline the process for Safe Scouting policies and guidelines. Other Council functions such as unit commissioners, Roundtable, and Program staff are involved to support a safe unit environment.

Youth Protection and Safety have long been a focus of Boy Scouts of America. Suffolk County Council has implemented Ever Alert/Ever Safe to promote an ongoing unit awareness of Safety. Helping units enhance Safety is the program's focus.

Units that implement this program will be recognized as an Ever Alert/Ever Safe Unit. A list of the key policies to achieve a safe unit are contained in the following Safety Toolkit. And having a safe unit can be a recruiting marketing tool for parents who are concerned about safety.

What's this program all about? Read on.

What is an Ever Alert / Ever Safe Recognized Unit?

Units that implement measures to maintain a safe environment will be recognized as an Ever Alert/Ever Safe Unit. The recognition is on an annual basis to show ongoing participation in the program.

Recognized units will be able to wear a patch on their uniforms indicating participation in the program. In addition to fostering a safe unit environment, Ever Alert/Ever Safe Unit recognition is a good marketing tool to prospective parents given their concern due to adverse publicity that has occurred.

What are the requirements?



Assessment

Activities are assessed for risks during planning. Leaders have reviewed applicable program guidance or standards and have verified the activity is not prohibited. Risk avoidance or mitigation is incorporated into the activity.

- Predetermining what guidance and standards are typically applied to the activity, including those specific to the Boy Scouts of America program.
- Planning for safe travel to and from the activity site.
- Validating the activity is age-appropriate for the Boy Scouts of America program level.
- Determining whether the unit has sufficient training, resources, and experience to meet the identified standards and, if not, modifying the activity accordingly.
- Developing contingency plans for changes in weather and environment and arranging for communication with participants, parents, and emergency services.

Fitness and skill

Participants' Annual Health and Medical Records are reviewed, and leaders have confirmed that prerequisite fitness and skill levels exist for participants to take part safely.

- Confirming the activity is right for the age, maturity, and physical abilities of participants.
- Considering as risk factors temporary or chronic health conditions of participants.
- Validating minimum skill requirements identified during planning and ensuring participants stay within the limits of their abilities.
- Providing training to participants with limited skills and assessing their skills before they attempt more advanced skills.



Supervision

Youth are supervised by qualified and trustworthy adults who set the example for safety.

- Accepting responsibility for the well-being and safety of youth under their care.
- Ensuring that adults are adequately trained, experienced, and skilled to lead the activity, including the ability to prevent and respond to likely problems and potential emergencies.
- Knowing and delivering the program of the Boy Scouts of America with integrity.
- Using qualified instructors, guides, or safety personnel as needed to provide additional guidance.
- Maintaining engagement with participants during activities to ensure compliance with established rules and procedures.

Within each Scouting year:

- Unit demonstrates the use of Safety Moments at meetings and events.
- Unit has completed age-appropriate annual Youth on Youth abuse training.
- At least one adult demonstrates completion of appropriate medical training based on type of unit. (Senior youth acceptable for Scouts BSA, Venturers, and Explorers/Learning for Life.)
Medically trained requirements by type of unit are:
 - Cub Scouts/Webelos Packs– First Aid (Not required for den meetings)
 - Scouts BSA Troops – Wilderness First Aid & CPR
 - Venturing/Sea Scouts Crews – First Aid & CPR (Wilderness First Aid for High Adventure Units)
 - Explorer/Learning for Life Posts – First Aid & CPR
A medical professional, EMT, or First Responder satisfies this requirement for all units.
- Have an adult designated and trained as the Unit Safety Champion for unit meetings and event activities.
- Demonstrate SAFE Checklist and Safety Toolkit use for meetings and events for at least 6 months.
- Show reports of incidents and near misses that occurred at meetings/outings for at least 6 months.

The 7 Questions to Ask for Safe Activities

To get the right answers we need to ask the right questions. Particularly where safety is concerned.

Ever Alert/Ever Safe is a streamlined Roadmap to Safety. Start with the planned activities for your meeting or event and answer the following questions in order. It's a process that's quicker than you think.

The 7 Safety Questions are:

1. Is everyone prepared to spot and prevent physical and emotional abuse?
2. Is everyone constantly alert to and aware of Safety responsibilities?
3. Are our planned activities safe for our age group?
4. How do we make sure we've covered everything?
5. Can we transport everyone safely?
6. What if we are caught in an active shooter situation?
7. Who do we go to for Safety guidance and answers?

The requirements to answer these 7 questions are the BSA Safety policies and guidelines found in the following Ever Alert/Ever Safe Safety Toolkit. By asking and answering these 7 questions for your event you have a streamlined activity review process that focuses on the key Safety requirements.

Accident & Sickness Insurance

- Furnishes medical reimbursement within the policy amounts of death, accident, or sickness in excess of an individual's available, existing medical expense coverage.
 - Covers all registered adult volunteers, registered youth, and guests of registered youth. (Guests are defined as parents, grandparents and siblings of registered members participating in a Scouting event.)
 - Covers non-registered youth and adults only while attending scheduled activities for becoming leaders and scouts (See excerpt from policy on pg. 4, below.) Does not furnish medical reimbursement coverage for other non-registered adults and youth
- **Will this Ever Alert/Ever Safe program affect my unit's insurance coverage?**

If anything, the program will help preserve a unit's insurance coverage. General Liability insurance is provided by a third-party insurance company. It covers Scouting activities done in accordance with National BSA's safety requirements. Unit activities not performed in accordance with National requirements may compromise a unit's General Liability coverage.

Insurance

- **What insurance coverage does my unit and chartering organization have?**

General Liability Insurance

- Civil liability insurance in the event of a suit for negligence
- Covers:
 - Council, professional staff, charter organizations, chartering organizations, registered units, registered adult volunteers
 - Unregistered volunteers involved in a scouting activity above and beyond personal insurances
 - Indemnification for unregistered individuals attending a “joining event”.
- Does not indemnify persons and organizations who commit intentional, malicious, or criminal acts.

The Ever Alert/Ever Safe Safety Toolkit

The Safety Toolkit provides the key Safety policies and requirements on how units can maintain a safe program.

They are:

1. Youth Protection/Barriers to Abuse
2. Safety Moments
3. Age-Appropriate Guidelines/Guide to Safe Scouting (The Big Book of “Know”)
4. National SAFE Checklist
5. Transportation Safety Checklist
6. Violent Intruder Protocol
7. Your District Safety Champion

Answering the 7 Safe Activities questions using the above key National policies and guidelines is the streamlined process to a safe unit.

The links to all these resources can be found on the Territory 10 Safety webpage:

<https://bsa-cst10.org/safety/>

- **What is Safe Scouting?**

Safe Scouting is a process. It's the process of preventing personal injury and preparation in case someone somehow is hurt or has a medical emergency. There is also prevention of equipment damage whether someone is hurt or not. It's National Council's Safety policies and guidelines on how to prevent and recover from adverse events during Scouting activities.

- **Is there Safe Scouting training for the Ever Alert/Ever Safe Program?**

Yes. An online training video is available at <https://bsa-cst10.org/safety/> under Ever Alert/Ever Safe banner. It will be updated and additional Safety training added.

- **Aren't all these unit safety requirements going to take the fun out of scouting?**

Absolutely not! The Safety requirements and Ever Alert/Ever Safe Program are the best ways to have fun. Getting hurt is not fun. Serious injury is even less fun. These requirements are in place so Scouting events are both fun and safe.

Fun and Safety work together to accomplish the Mission of the Boy Scouts of America. Put another way, *"Keep it Safe. Make it Fun"*.

- **Who is required to report? Do Incident Reporting requirements even apply to units?**

Anyone can report an incident. All registered scouters and are required to report. But it is recommended that reporting abuse or injury beyond first aid incident in a unit should be the responsibility of one person to avoid duplicate reporting. But again, single individuals can report if they feel appropriate.

- **What is an Incident Reporting Near Miss? How do I report an incident that didn't occur?**

This is part of Ever Alert in Ever Alert/Ever Safe. An ooh, that was close. Or an observation that an activity could have a risk aspect that may not have been addressed. Maybe a helmet might be a good idea in a particular activity. Common sense often could apply in such an observation. By being alert to a potential risk, we can prevent occurrence. It doesn't hurt to take the time to report such an observation.



- **What is Incident Reporting?**

Incident Reporting is National Council's data gathering process to improve safety requirements. It is not for the assignment of blame. By compiling and trending incidents of abuse, property damage, and Near Misses, Incident Reporting provides National and local councils with information to monitor incidents and continually improve requirements when appropriate.

On Near Miss reporting, this is different from reports of Youth Protection violations, injury beyond first aid, and property damage. Near Misses are where no one was hurt no property damage occurred. But potential injury or damage could be reduced by an improved Safety requirement. We can make changes before someone is hurt or damage occurs.

Forms for reporting an incident or Near Miss are available in the Territory's Safety webpage under the provided Incident Reporting link at <https://bsa-cst10.org/safety/>

- **What type of Incidents should I report?**

The easiest way to determine if an Incident Report should be filed is by using the Information Reporting Infographic. Starting at the top of the tree and answer each question yes or no on the type of incident until you reach a point where a report is recommended or not. In some cases, the submission of a report is optional.

The Incident Report infographic is available at the bottom of National's Incident Reporting webpage at the [Incident Reporting Infographic webpage](#).

- **Is Suffolk County Council going to provide support to answer Safe Scouting questions?**

Yes. That is the role of your District Safety Champion. Units can contact their respective District Safety Champion with questions or clarification of a Safety requirement. Unit Commissioners are also a resource for Safety information.

- **What is a Unit Safety Champion?**

The Unit Safety Champion is an in-unit resource to unit leadership who will become more familiar with Safe Scouting policies and guidelines. To oversee unit activities and advise leadership that unit activities are conducted safely, are age appropriate, or are not conducted when too dangerous. Unit leadership can concentrate on delivering their program while the Unit Safety Champion advises on how to conduct activities safely. There is an existing National registration position code for Health and Safety Chair.

This can be a very useful unit Safe Scouting resource. Everyone needs to be familiar with Safe Scouting policies. The Unit Safety Champion is an onsite resource.

- **Do we need to find another volunteer to be the Unit Safety Champion?**

Not really. It can be best as a standalone position in the unit. Or it can be an additional role for a current volunteer already a registered leader. Just be careful that whoever the Unit Safety Champion is, you avoid taking on too many roles. Whoever it is, give Safety its due. Safety experience counts.

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- **What is a District Safety Champion and who are they?**

The District Safety Champion is a resource for unit leaderships and their Unit Safety Champion to get answers or clarification for any question about Safety. Who they are and their contact information should be available from your local council. They are also at their respective district's monthly Roundtable where they give Safety updates and reminders.

- **What are National's Safe Scouting policies and methods?**

These are National and Suffolk County Council youth protection and activity safety requirements to ensure that Scouting activities are conducted as safely as possible. They list Youth Protection abuse prevention requirements, permitted activities by age group, permitted activity controls to minimize risk of injury, and non-permitted activities where the risk of serious injury is too high.

There's also Incident Reporting requirements to continually improve Scouting's safety environment. See "What is Incident Reporting?".

Common sense is also a way to ensure a safe unit environment. National's requirements may not address every possible Scouting activity. Unit leadership should be aware that common sense is also a Safety tool. (See What is the Ever Alert/Ever Safe Safety Toolkit?)

- **Where are the Safe Scouting policies available?**

An extensive list of the National Council's Safe Scouting policies and procedures are available on the Suffolk County Council Council's Safety webpage at www.sccbsa.org/safety. The listing

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has hyperlinks to National Council's webpages. Click each link to directly access each requirement.

- **What are Safety Moments? How are they used?**

One thing we want youth and adults to do is be continually alert to the possibility of injury, abuse, or equipment/property damage. Youth awareness of dangers will go a long way toward keeping themselves safe. They are not always alert to potential dangers. The same applies to adults.

Safety Moments are exactly what the name implies. They are opportunities to prepare for a Scouting activity, review safety measures, or report incidents correctly. They keep Safety front of mind. An easy way to continually remind youth and adults to think about the possibility of injury, equipment damage, or preparation if something bad occurs. Safety Moment topics include subjects like safe use of prescribed medication in Scouting, weather-related safety, cold weather camping, winter sports, and Incident Reporting helps. Scouters can also do a personal Safety Moment on a subject not covered by available subjects on National's Safety Moment webpage. The national site is <https://www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/safety-moments/>

Note: if a Safety Moment is for an adult audience only, it will be indicated at the top of the Safety Moments page.